



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

YEAR 1 & YEAR 2 ANNUAL REPORT



Jack Gordon for USAID/Digital Development Communications

DIGITAL STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

USAID's Digital Strategy promotes more open, inclusive, and secure digital ecosystems to enhance the Agency's mission of improving development and humanitarian assistance outcomes. The Annual Report highlights the achievements made in Year One and Year Two of the Digital Strategy implementation and previews future directions.

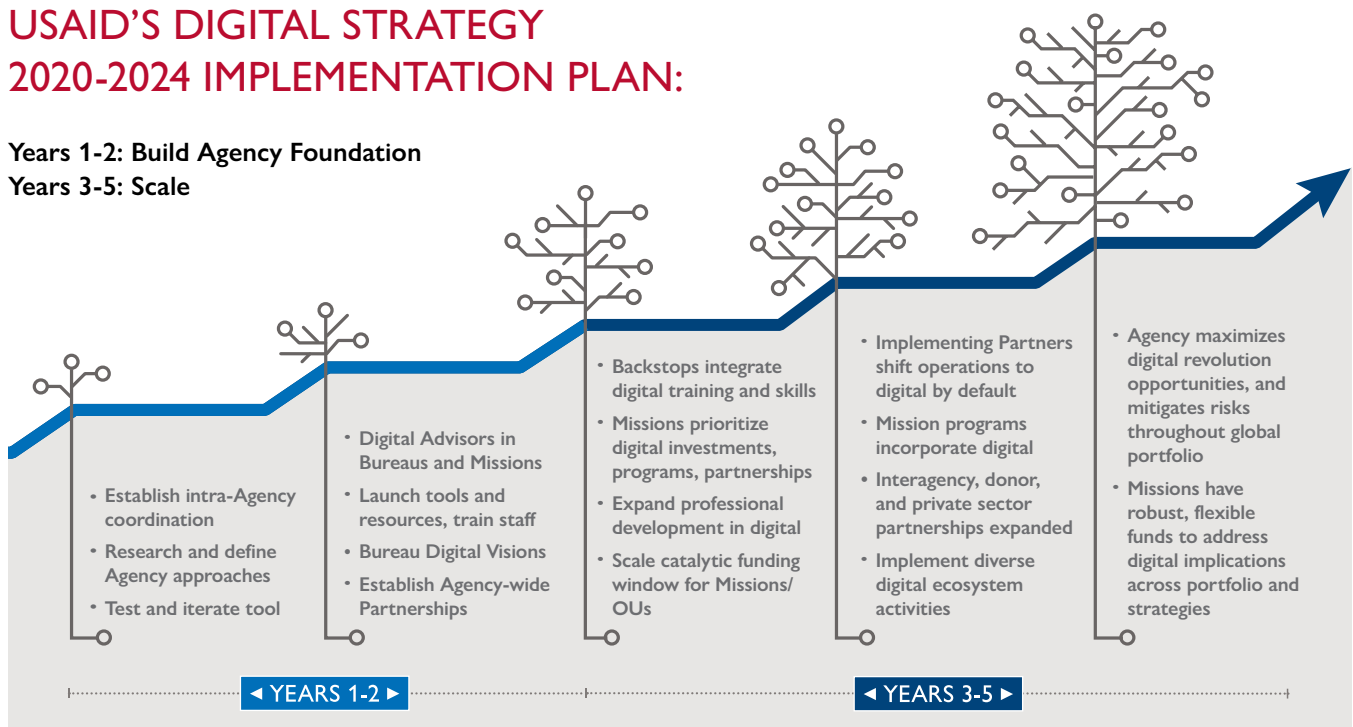
USAID's Digital Strategy centers around two mutually reinforcing objectives:

- Objective 1:** Improve measurable development and humanitarian assistance outcomes through the responsible use of digital technology in USAID's programming.
- Objective 2:** Strengthen the openness, inclusiveness, and security of country-level digital ecosystems.

USAID'S DIGITAL STRATEGY 2020-2024 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

Years 1-2: Build Agency Foundation

Years 3-5: Scale



YEARS 1 & 2: BUILDING THE AGENCY'S FOUNDATION

YEAR 1: Focused on defining the scope of the Digital Strategy by engaging in fundamental research and determining the best approaches for achieving the Strategy's goals.

YEAR 2: Focused on increasing the use of piloted tools and resources, developing partnerships, and expanding the number and reach of the Agency's digital experts.

ACHIEVEMENTS FROM YEAR 1 & 2

Spearheaded by the Innovation, Technology, and Research (ITR) Hub within the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation, USAID created internal processes to integrate the Digital Strategy from 2020-2022. These processes are designed to integrate easier methods of inter-agency coordination, expand focus areas in programming, and equip Agency staff with the professional skills to implement the strategy.

Establishing intra-agency coordination and cooperation. The Digital Strategy implementation team founded the Digital Sector Council, six cross-sectoral working groups, and held strategy sessions for Digital Strategy leadership to develop long-term goals and implementation milestones:

- **Digital Sector Council:** Agency staff representing every bureau, independent office, and technical sector joined the Digital Sector Council upon its formation in May 2020. The Council meets monthly to discuss Digital Strategy implementation, share operating unit (OU)-specific digital work, shape Agency digital development products, and discuss digital issues that impact the Agency's work.
- **Intra-Agency Working Groups:** The ITR Hub's Digital Strategy Leads and Technology Division experts established working groups on the following topics: Cybersecurity, Digital Literacy, Digital Action Plans, Digital Development Advisors, Artificial Intelligence, and Digital Identification.
- **Connect and Reflect sessions:** 30-minute weekly working discussions designed to elicit rapid peer-to-peer feedback on a wide range of Digital Strategy topics, from Mission outreach to digital skills training, and to encourage cross-collaboration. The 17 Digital Strategy initiative Leads and ITR Hub's Technology Division management participate in these sessions as well as others as appropriate.

Expanding Agency Digital Development focus areas and defining USAID's approach in programming. The Digital Strategy developed knowledge products that formalized the Agency's approach to digital development and established baseline definitions to help the Agency and its partners navigate and employ digital development::

- **Conducted desk research and landscape assessments** on the Gender Digital Divide, Digital Literacy, Cybersecurity, Protecting Children from Digital Harm, Digital Payments, Data Governance, and began building the Digital Ecosystem Evidence Map.
- **Initiative leads held multiple learning workshops** and consultation sessions to refine implementation strategies based on the outcomes of their research and analyses. This research was used to develop primers and toolkits for Mission staff, including the Digital Investment Tool, the Gender Digital Divide Primer, a Digital Payments Toolkit, and the Cybersecurity Primer.

The Digital Strategy team **honed the concept of a digital ecosystem** for USAID and how the Agency can strengthen partner country ecosystems by developing:

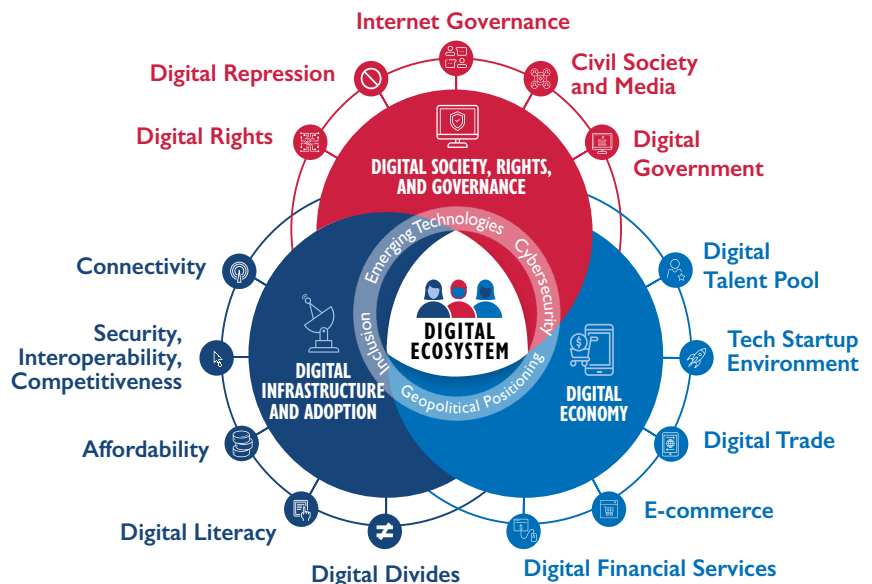
- **Digital Ecosystem Framework:**

The Digital Strategy team held a series of workshops with Agency digital experts and finalized the Digital Ecosystem Framework.

- **Digital Ecosystem Country Assessments (DECA):** USAID piloted DECA in Colombia, Kenya, Serbia and Nepal. The pilots' actionable reports resulted in eight additional DECA's starting in FY21, including Uzbekistan, Peru, Eastern and Southern Caribbean, Libya, Moldova, and Zambia; and increased demand for future DECA's.

- **Digital Ecosystem Fund:** Fourteen Missions received \$6.2M for activities that harness, shape, or strengthen the digital ecosystem in multiple sectors during the first and second rounds of the fund.

- **Principles for Digital Development:** The team created and delivered a training on "How to Strategically Invest in Digital Technologies by using the Digital Investment Tool" for staff and partners.



The Digital Strategy team **established programs and organizational structures** to equip Agency staff to become digital leaders in development by:

- **Establishing the Digital Development Executive Fellowship:** Select Foreign Service Officers spend one year with the ITR Hub's Technology Division to learn about the Agency's digital development work, followed by one year detailed to a technology firm or digital development-focused organization and then a third year forging a new initiative in USAID headquarters. The first fellow is concluding her detail to the Crypto Council for Innovation while the second fellow is on track to negotiate his placement at a leading technology company. The third fellow has been assigned and will begin soon.
- **Creating and refining the "Get Smart Guide":** The Digital Strategy team updated the guide in 2021 to ensure Agency staff are aware of and can navigate the different training opportunities and resources available through the Digital Strategy.
- **Expanding the Digital Development Advisor (DDA) initiative:** The team drafted position descriptions at the Foreign Service National 12, 11, and 10 levels and began working with the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management to make them available to the Agency Missions. The team also helped nine Missions hire new DDA generalists and by mid-FY21 onboarded a new USAID staff member to lead the DDA initiative full time.
- **Creating a new Technology Division team and a new leadership position:** Through the Digital Strategy, the ITR Hub's Technology Division established the first-ever Cybersecurity Team focused on USAID programming and implementing partners, and the Digital Strategy team began advocating for a new Chief Digital Development Officer role that was approved in Spring 2021.

LOOKING AHEAD: SCALING THE DIGITAL STRATEGY

In the third year of Digital Strategy implementation, the team focuses on scaling the products, knowledge, and relationships developed in the first two years and on ensuring staff and partners are empowered to responsibly integrate digital technology into their work. The Digital Strategy team continues to invest in professional development opportunities for staff and provide more targeted technical assistance to OUs and partners, including:

- **Formalizing Digital Strategy within the Agency:** The implementation team continues to work with and support OUs in operationalizing the Digital Strategy. In addition to finalizing and promoting the new ADS chapter and encouraging use of the Global Acquisition and Assistance System tag across the Agency, the implementation team supports Missions in conducting DECAs and Bureaus and Independent Offices at Headquarters develop Action Plans for their regions or technical sectors.
- **Launching new, turnkey resources for staff and partners:** Products will include the DECA Toolkit and initiative-specific trainings on the Principles for Digital Development, cybersecurity, gender digital divide, and digital literacy. Additional knowledge products will include short training videos on cybersecurity, digital literacy, digital governance, and protecting children from digital harm technical primer and roadmap.
- **Deepening Agency and U.S. Government (USG) collaboration:** Initiative leads continue to participate in other initiative working groups and present together at internal and external conferences. Initiatives will enhance collaboration within the Agency and across the USG by hosting and engaging in both intra-agency and interagency efforts such as roundtables, working groups, and conferences.
- **Expanding external partnerships:** The Digital Strategy implementation team continues to build on partnerships to achieve the two mutually reinforcing goals of the Digital Strategy. As part of this effort, the Digital Strategy team supported USAID's participation in the Digital Public Goods Alliance and GovStack Initiative, an alliance of international donors, nonprofits, and multilateral organizations that supports governments to digitally transform their government services and processes. Creating new external partnerships will enable USAID to continue coordination on digital strategy initiatives and digital public goods with international stakeholders and align efforts internationally.

